

Del. 1 section opens with fanfare, tolls

By CHIP GUY
Staff reporter

It was an event worthy of marching bands, mascots, dignitaries and a parade of old cars.

But this celebration was not staged to mark the return of a local hero who had made good in the world. Nor was it for the winning high school football team.

It was for a road opening.

State leaders, dozens of guests and the Delaware State University marching band braved a brisk wind Wednesday morning for the official unveiling of the new portion of Del. 1 in southern New Castle County.

The new road, intended to alleviate congestion along U.S. 13, officially opened Wednesday when tolls went into effect for the 11-mile section that runs from the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal to south of Odessa.

Motorists now will have to pay at least \$1 to use the limited-access highway. Rates are higher for vehicles with three or more axles, and cheaper for motorists using E-ZPass, an electronic collection system that deducts tolls from a customer's pre-paid account.

► Maryland to expand its use of electronic tolls . **B6**

The \$99 million highway is the latest segment in what eventually will be a limited-access toll road stretching from near the canal to Dover.

This portion, which took more than three years to build, began opening last month. It eventually will join the Smyrna-Dover bypass in 2003 or 2004 when the rest of the highway is finished.

Construction on that final phase is expected to begin in spring.

Gov. Tom Carper and other state officials said the new road promises to ease congestion in the Boyds Corner and Odessa areas, and make it easier for beach-bound motorists.

"What that does, by improving access, is make economic development opportunities more attractive in the central part of the state," said state Department of Transportation Secretary Anne P. Canby.

Highway officials expect 30,000 vehicles to use the new Del. 1 each day, and 20,000 more to use U.S. 13.

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